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# Journey Up The Mountain: A Tale Of Two Brothers



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## Chapter 1 by Kristina

It's been a long time since the great fall, says my nana. She's glad my brother was not around to see it. 15 years ago, a disease swept most of the world, a plague, that was entitled the Great Plague. Nations collapsed as the world fell to death and chaos. My mother and father were killed, so my brother and I live with my nana on her farm.

"You kids don't have to do anything for me. I never did anything for your parents. I was selfish, judgmental, inhuman..." She lists from bed, both of us looking down at her.

"But you did stuff for us," my brother says innocently. "We'll go get you medicine."

"Oh, sweetie..." She trails off weakly. I'm not sure if my brother has the wit, but I have my suspicions that this is the plague. Where would she have caught it?

"Daniel," I address my younger brother emotionlessly, "go play outside." With fear in his eyes from my less than friendly tone, he leaves the room quickly. "Nana, do you think it's the plague?" I ask and sit on the edge of her bed.

"No. The plague is gone," she says sternly, "Even if it weren't, the only remedies ever made for the plague were made far up in the mountains by a witch named Forra."

"Forra," I repeat, thinking. "Which mountain?"

"The Gray Mountains. The ones you can see from the library dear. Wait, you aren't thinking of going there if you even step foot..."

"I won't," I say after a few...

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"Take care," she says hesitantly, folding her hands over her stomach. I stare at her for a few seconds and then leave the room. I grab a bag and fill it with apples, bread, and one of the sharpest knives in the house.

"Damian," I address the man sitting at our kitchen table, my father's brother. "Please watch over my grandmother."

"Right-o," he agrees, taking a sip of his whiskey. I sigh and step outside.

"Daniel," I call. Daniel looks up from the ant hill he was inspecting, and runs up to me. "We're going on a trip," I say and smile at him.

"A trip?" He asks softly. "A trip where?"

"To meet Forra. Our great aunt," I say. Daniel has always had an odd issue with new people unless you tell him they are a relative of ours.

"I see. Who is she?" He asks happily, skipping alongside me down the street.

"She's magic," I say in the most kid friendly way I can muster, smiling at our little conversation. He grins.

"Magic?" He asks in amazement. I nod once.

"She's going to fix nana right up," I say. "Hopefully."

"She will?" He asks, gasping.

"Yes." I nod. "But we have to walk all the way up that mountain," I say and point ahead of us to the tallest mountain that surrounds White Valley.

"That's a lot," he says and frowns.

"We'll meet a lot of friends along the way though," I lie, not expecting to see many souls along our long path, other than maybe bears.

He grins and we walk for about a mile before sunset rolls around. "We aren't even out of town yet, and it's so dark," I groan. "It will take forever to get there. Nana will be dead by the time we-" My brother bursts into tears. "By the time we're twenty years old."

"What?"

"By the time we're twenty years old. That's a long time from now."

"You're seventeen," he says with a gasp.

"Nana's not gonna die," I say with a small sigh. He calms down a bit. "I mean not for like maybe

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"Aunty Forra," my brother corrects me.

"You're going through the mountains alone?" He asks. "How old are you boys?"

"6!" My brother answers proudly.

"17," I answer quietly. "We'll be fine."

"It's a dangerous place, out in those woods. First, take this," he says. He picks up a can of change sitting beside him and dumps it into his hand, then hands it to Daniel. "And second, remember that no one is asking you to do this. Good luck, boys."

"Thank you," I say softly. My brother and I walk for another hour probably before we make it to the edge of the town.

"Frederick," Daniel complains, "my legs hurt."

"Alright. We can stop walking for today," I say. Outside the town is a huge field before the forest starts.

I lay down in the grass, putting my bag behind my head, and stare up at the stars.

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